

Opening Statement of  
Ranking Republican Don Young  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2420, National  
Museum of the American Latino Act

I want to thank Chair Haaland for convening this hearing today. We have before us today legislation offered by our colleague from New York, Mr. Serrano, to establish in the Smithsonian, the National Museum of the American Latino.

I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation. I am grateful to Mr. Serrano for his efforts to highlight the rich contributions Latinos have made to all aspects of American life. Their collective efforts have greatly benefited the U.S. economy, strengthened our military, and richly enhanced arts and culture for hundreds of years. Roughly 22 percent of children in the United States live in Latino households. Latino owned

businesses are a powerhouse in terms of businesses owned and operated. Latinos also represent nearly 15 percent of all active military personnel and more than 61 Hispanic-American soldiers have been recipients of the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military decoration.

Proposals to establish a National Museum of the American Latino have been discussed for many years, dating back to the mid-1990's when the Smithsonian first reviewed its representation of Latinos both in its workforce and in its museums. In 2008, Congress approved, and President George W. Bush enacted a law establishing a National Museum of the American Latino Commission. This Commission thoroughly studied the need for a museum, the museum's vision and purpose, possible governance structure, construction costs, and how funds for the museum might be raised.

While the Smithsonian has made strides in recent years to more fully share the story of

Latinos in the United States, including through creation of an American Latino Center and a future gallery within the Museum of American History, I believe that it is time for Congress to consider establishing a standalone museum.

While I am a proponent of this effort, there are certainly many considerations that Congress must think critically about, including design and construction costs, ongoing repair and maintenance costs, and museum placement. I look forward to discussing many of those challenges today.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.